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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "HOUSEHOLD INSECTICIDES." Information of value to consumers, from the Federal Food and Drug Administration, Washington, D. C.

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"One day last spring," begins our Washington News Letter, "a certain radio reporter in Washington, D. C. gave a talk on the clothes moth. In that talk, she mentioned the leaflet, entitled 'Clothes Moths and Their Control,' published by the Department of Agriculture.

"The response to that talk was -- Well, if I weren't a conservative person I'd say the response was 'terrific.' Thousands of women wrote for the leaflet -- homemakers in every part of the United States -- even in Canada. Some of them wrote that the clothes moth is Insect Enemy Number One--in the American home."

Our correspondent goes on to say that she thought of that broadcast this morning, when she visited the Food and Drug Administration to get some facts for us on household insecticides. This Administration, as you know, enforces the Insecticide Act. Well -- here's what our Washington reporter learned about preparations sold to prevent damage from the clothes moth.

"I found," she says, "that a large number of moth preparations are put on sale before the manufacturer has tested them, adequately, to tell whether or not they are effective.

"In the past, there may have been a reason for this, because there were no very satisfactory methods of testing so-called moth-proofing preparations -- particularly the preparations that leave a residue in the fibers of material. The purpose of this residue is to protect the material from moth damage over a considerable period of time.

"However, methods for testing have been improved, and from now on consumers will have better luck when they buy preparations aimed to keep the moth from the closet door.

"Last year the Food and Drug officials examined nearly 3,000 samples of insecticides, fungicides, and disinfectants. These represented the output of about 750 manufacturers. Of the total number of samples examined, more than 300 were moth preparations.

"Another household insect that plagues the homemaker is the common house fly. I have just learned," says our correspondent, "that a house-fly,\* in the latitude of Washington, D. C., may have, all in about four or five months -- an unbelievable

\*From "The Insect Menace" by L.O. Howard.



number of descendants -- But here's the number -- five trillion, 598 billion, 720 million. (Don't worry. That's possible, but not probable.)

"Food and Drug officials have examined many fly sprays. They use a new chemical method by which they can tell, without actual test, whether the product will kill flies. Of course if they're in doubt about a certain spray, it's easy enough to make a few tests against flies.

"A large proportion of the commercial fly sprays on the market now are of satisfactory strength. A few, however, are of little value. Inspectors found a few products composed merely of kerosene, with some added substance to hide the odor. These were removed from the market. As a matter of fact, during the past year many of the weak or worthless fly sprays have disappeared from the market, as a result of action by Federal authorities.

"A third insect that leads the housewife a melancholy chase is the ant. A great number of poison ant baits are on sale, but these baits are effective only when they attract the ants to them, and cause them to eat the poison. Remember, if your house is a mecca for ants -- remember there are many different species of these insects. Some infest the house -- the kitchen. Others the garden, or the lawn.

"If you want to be an authority on ants, send to the Department of Agriculture for a copy of the leaflet entitled 'House Ants.' This leaflet describes the more common ones, such as Pharoah's ant -- the little red one, so tiny you can hardly see it; the large yellow ant; the large black ant; the small black ant; the thief ant; the pavement ant; the Argentine ant. Also, this leaflet gives methods of control.

"Now let's return to the Food and Drug Administration, and a few words about insecticides for use on animals; in particular, fly sprays for horses and cattle. Some of these fly sprays bear claims that are not quite true. For example, some of them claim to kill flies which happen to light on a critter that's been sprayed. As a matter of fact, not one of the sprays examined was found to be effective in killing flies that alighted on a sprayed horse or cow. Of the 50 samples tested, action was taken in 16 cases. Animal fly sprays found to be worthless have been removed from the market."

And that concludes today's report from the Federal Food and Drug Administration, which enforces the Insecticide Act. I am surprised at our Washington correspondent -- she must be slipping. She forgot to remind us to read the labels -- on all insecticides we buy, for man or beast, for house or barn.

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